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**Inaugural Address of President E. W. Jones, Delivered
February 4, 1889.**

MEMBERS OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA—
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: First, let me take occasion to thank the society for the honor which it has seen fit to confer upon me. It is the custom, and perhaps a duty, for your president on taking his seat to deliver such an address as he deems best for the welfare of the society. In conformity to that custom, I have prepared and now ask your attention to the following brief remarks.

This society was formed in the latter part of 1883. At first it seemed to have promise of large membership. The idea had the approval of most, if not all, of the more important of the founders and builders of the social and political fabric of Southern California, who still survived, but though many signified their approval, the active membership was always meager in numbers. In January, 1884, the first inaugural address was delivered by Col. J. J. Warner. In it he said "to collect and preserve historical matter is the main object of our mission." "Old land marks are rapidly disappearing; things which are now common in a few years will be rare and after a few years will cease to be," and so he goes on through a most suggestive discourse advising the prosecution of historical research and collation.

In all subsequent inaugural addresses the same idea is the prevailing one—that to history and that the history of this region, should our principal attention be paid. Our actual accomplishments in this line have hardly been what they should be, but we have collected many valuable historical data in both printed and written form. We have kept alive the society through a period most unpropitious for its usefulness or even its existence. The little band of the faithful, who recognized its importance, has held together for the most part, and my faith in its material is so great, my assurance of its devotion is so strong, that I predict that most of the few, who so steadily attend our meetings, will live to see the day when this society is established in its own halls and equipped with a rich array of historical and scientific treasures. We have apparently lost the aid of some of our members most capable in the line of historical information and research. I believe we suffered the loss of but one member, Capt. Stanley, by death. But we miss, perhaps more than any other, the vigorous intellect and impressive presence of the man who first presided over this body. We miss the historical association that attend the name, the weight and authority which accompany the discourse of Col. J. J. Warner, who compelled by the bodily not mental

infirmities, which accompany great age, to lay aside active duties, comes no more among us. I trust we may still avail ourselves of his services by visiting him, and preserve much of the store of knowledge of the history of this region not yet on record by having it taken down at his dictation. Others also we may hope to enlist in the work of the society as the lighter demands of business permit. Material has been accumulating in the hands of the curator all these years until now we have a considerable mass.

Our funds have always been so carefully handled that we are in a sound financial condition. Our correspondence has been constantly increasing. We have verified and recorded the discovery of a tusk of large proportions. The fragment found being six feet long and six inches in diameter, in a well at a depth of 30 feet, some 20 miles east of this city; of the skeleton of a whale on the summit of the Santa Monica mountains; an interesting specimen of aboriginal cryptograph writing on the rocks of the San Gabriel cañon and the Mojave valley region. These are only some salient features of our scientific work. I will not take time to go further into details.

On the whole, the society has made as great progress as is usual in the beginning of such enterprises, and perhaps its progress may be regarded as remarkable and indicative of its having struck its roots deep and into good soil, considering the nature of the times through which it has survived. Although it is not formed exclusively for work in the field of history, yet such work is mainly its object and in that field have its most valuable results been accomplished.

Not that it is well to discourage further labor in the domain of science that has already furnished us with interesting and instructive matter for consideration, and without it we would hardly succeed in inducing a wide spread interest in the work of the society. Without it some of our most valuable members would drop away and stagnation threaten us.

From the realm of the sciences we expect to exact in the future as in the past rich tribute, yet I repeat the most important field of effort for this organization is to-day that of local history. Our own and its tributary region has large historical resources which even the systematic and indefatigable research of Bancroft and his able assistants has failed to discover. Those machine made volumes of the San Francisco historian, vast and varied as is their scope, and minute and accurate as their data may be, are still very far short of exhibiting all the inner and more vital facts and events in the life of the people of this region since their history began. The record of these facts and events should be made by loving hands, and the members of this society, to most of whom this land is permanently home, should largely devote their efforts to the task.

The brief history of Los Angeles county, compiled for the Centennial, reveals the wealth of event which this region has accumulated since the advent of the white man, but it touches little more than salient points. The amount of suggestion which it affords to the searcher, however, is invaluable. Day by day, too, the data which ought to be gathered and recorded in an enduring form—many of which, as has already been said, now seem so

common place and trivial, but which will hereafter be regarded as gems of price—are becoming deeper buried in the rubbish of time or lost altogether. The blending of races here is a theme of great significance. It seems at first sight as if the pioneer race, who brought the arts of civilization to these shores, is being extinguished by the flood of immigration which has prevailed for the last few years, but the blood of those adventurous people, strong in body and mind, still coursing in the veins of thousands among us, will not fail to tell powerfully upon the final homogeneous race which is to occupy this region.

That race will be one whose origin will arrest the attention and excite the inquiry of people of science and culture.

Descended from the Spaniard who conquered and civilized the greater part of the new world, from the race of the Montezumas, whose palaces, temples and viaducts, whose intelligence, bravery and patriotism challenged not only the admiration of the invaders, but that of all brave peoples to this day—from the fearless and strong brained pioneers of Saxon, Gallic and Teutonic blood of the second quarter of the century; from the Argonauts of the "days of gold" and from the educated and enterprising people from the northern and southern States and across the Atlantic, who have been thronging to this region in late years, the final assimilation is likely to produce something unique and admirable—something superior in the way of a people. The peculiarly favorable conditions under which existence is sustained here, add to the probability of such a result.

The novelist who is also a historian—who finds the richest food for his fancy in the realm of fact—who makes a very large proportion of the best history that is written, will find inexhaustible material for his weaving in this field which is generally deemed so barren. The story of *Ramona* does not exhaust the treasures of romance which this land of sunshine and beauty holds in store. It but serves to guide some rays of light down into the depths where the gems still lie buried in darkness.

The poet, too, will show that this is naturally the land of song, and will find here no lack of themes on which to plume the wing of his fancy.

But for both, the plodding chronicler, the jotter down "of unconsidered trifles," the delver in folk and other lore, the recorder of the private and home history of the people, must furnish the staple for the weaving. I dare to predict that this land where, it has been said that "it is always afternoon," this region of constant sunshine—where the mocking bird sings his sweet songs at midnight and where Nature's heart-beats in slumberous music are audible all night long to the attentive ear, where the life current in one's veins, escaping the languor of the oppressive tropics or the chill of ice and snow, courses with unchanged vigor all the year—this favored land will prove prolific in sons of song and story, and will become one of the centers of art and culture of the western continent.

As for the work of the current year, I have made no attempt to map it out and confine it within rigid lines. The usual committees will, of course, be expected to do whatever time and opportunity offers in their several

fields, and it lies in the power of the society to appoint such new committees as its work requires; but with the subsidence of the swollen tide of speculation we may hope for some valuable additions to our membership and better general results to our labors. It would be well to look up the people who are interested in historical, literary and scientific work and induce them to co-operate with us. They would be more likely to do so now than at any other time in our history.

We have reason for asking and expecting some endowments from the people of this community in due season, and we ought, eventually at least, to be provided by the city government with suitable quarters and a site for a building which we hope finally to erect.

If we take hold of the work with the enthusiasm which its character deserves, we shall entitle the society to the benefits it expects. A little warmth of heart in our efforts will work wonders for us. There is no question but a little stagnation had begun to be felt.

Our fields have been invaded by pot-hunters—historical searchers and gatherers of relics and documents—for the money that can be made out of them. We should not wait till all these treasures have been captured by the invaders. I ask of the members hearty and harmonious co-operation in this and all other of the society's fields of labor for the coming year.

